

London District Women's Network Sunday 2012

Theme: Training for Gold

Introduction

London District Women's Network presents this resource as an option that can be used for Women's Network Sunday, whether or not each church choose to celebrate Women's Network on the chosen Sunday - 4th March 2012, or another date that can fit in each respective church's calendar.

This year, the focus is on the 2012 Olympics and the Theme chosen by the executive is –'Training for Gold'

The stories that are told, do not only focus on legendary athletes going back to several decades, but includes the modern day athlete, Stephanie Cook, who is a member of the 'More than Gold' team. Included in the stories, is the renowned astronomer Jocelyn Bell Burnell, who continues to promote the status of women in academia.

We share these stories in the belief that these are powerful enough, to inspire others to bring out the best in them selves and others irrespective, of age, sex gender, class or race.

'Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one get the prize? Run in such a way, as to get the prize. 1 Cor. 9:24 NIV

This resource is presented to remind everyone, that the new movement of MWIB exists to engage all ages- male and female, in the important task of promoting an inclusive church.

A Sunday devoted to MWIB, not only gives this dynamic Women's Movement within the church, transparency, but hopefully can help to

Page 1

enable and equip women of all ages in their discipleship role. It is formatted so that it can be adapted to fit in with a varied Order of Service and can also be a useful resource for Junior Church.

Call to Worship

Leader: 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us'. *Heb. 12:1NIV*

Hymn- "All Praise to our redeeming Love H&P 253

All praise to our redeeming Lord,
Who joins us by his grace,
And bids us, each to each restored,
Together seek his face.

He bids us build each other up;
And, gathered into one,
To our high calling's glorious hope
We hand in hand go on.

The gift which he on one bestows,
We all delight to prove,
The grace through every vessel flows
In purest streams of love.

E'en now we think and speak the same,
And cordially agree,
concentered all, through Jesus' name,

Page 2

In perfect harmony.

We all partake the joy of one;
The common peace we feel,
A peace to sensual minds unknown,
A joy unspeakable.

And if our fellowship below
In Jesus be so sweet,
What height of rapture shall we know
When round his throne we meet!

Prayers:

Prayer of Preparation and Confession

Leader: As we anticipate the coming 2012 Games, recognising the example of those who are training to compete, we pray that we may be ready, as we respond to God's call on our lives.

Leader: As athletes have coaches and supporters, who encourage them, Lord, may we receive support from you, from the Bible and from other Christians.

All: As we fix our eyes on Jesus, may we learn from His example. May we receive encouragement, and be ready to support those around us.

Leader: Let us throw off everything that hinders, and the sin that so easily entangles.

Leader Just as athletes make sure they are ready to compete, Lord, may our lives not be cluttered by sin or wrong burdens.

Page 3

All: As we fix our eyes on Jesus, determined to live in obedience to Him, may our sins be forgiven and our burdens lifted.

Leader: Let us run with perseverance.
As athletes keep going despite sometimes feeling like giving up, may we be willing to keep going, even when it's tough.

All: As we fix our eyes on Jesus, may we remember all He endured, and be encouraged not to give up.

Leader: Let us run the race marked out for us.
As athletes know the course they are to run, may we have confidence to know God's calling upon our lives each day.

All: As we fix our eyes on Jesus as our guide, may we become more and more like Him.

Leader: Lord Jesus, may we live with our eyes fixed on you, not growing weary or losing heart, but running with perseverance the race marked out for us.

All: Amen.

www.morethangold.org.uk

Prayer of Adoration

Father, creator of light, you shine over us in blessing and power,
Jesus, Light of the World, you shine as the Word of Life to guide us,
Spirit, fiery presence of God, you shine on us to bring hope and boldness.

We invite you to shine in our lives, in our communities and in this Nation, that all will see the light of your glory and discover your unfailing love.

All: Amen.

Page 4

Jesus - you shine in all your dazzling glory:
The brightest star cannot compare to your majesty;
The hottest sun cannot compare to your power;
The fairest moon cannot compare to your beauty.
We welcome you afresh in this jubilee and Olympic year
and ask you to shine on all people in this land.

Light our way as this Nation prepares to host the 2012 Games:
Shine grace on athletes in their training;
Shine wisdom on the authorities in their planning;
Shine your love in our hearts as we open our doors to welcome
guests from many nations.
We rejoice in your glorious presence with us,
Praying that the light of your love and grace will transform us all.
All: Amen.

www.morethangold.org.uk

Story 1 Eric Liddell

At the mention of the name Eric Liddell, two things immediately come to mind for most people – “The man who would not run on Sunday”, the man about whom the Oscar winning movie “Chariots of fire” was made.

Born in Tientsin (now Tianji) China, Eric Henry Liddell was the son of Rev and Mrs Dunlop Liddell who were Scottish Missionaries with the London Missionary Society in China. When he was old enough Eric and his brother was sent to Boarding School in Mottingham, where his sporting career began. Although he was enrolled at the University of Edinburgh to read Pure Science, rugby and athletics formed a large part of his university career.

Eric Liddell became known as the ‘Flying Scotsman’ and was the

Page 5

first Scottish man to win Gold in the 1924 Paris Olympics. As a committed Christian, Liddell refused to run on a Sunday and was forced to withdraw from the 100 metres race, which was his best event. He, however, decided to race in the 400 meters event and trained hard for it. Very little was expected of him and no one was convinced that he would win. As he was going to the starting blocks, an American slipped a piece of paper into his hand with a quotation from 1 Samuel 2: 30, “***Those who honour me will I honour***”. Liddell ran with the piece of paper in his hand, he not only won the race but won the existing world record with a time of 47.6 seconds.

After the Olympics, Liddell returned to China to work as a missionary. In China he achieved a greater prize than the Olympic Gold. He worked as a teacher in a Chinese Boys’ School. He was then sent by the London Missionary Society to Siao Cheng to serve as a village evangelist. He also worked in other villages where he suffered many hardships.

When the Japanese invaded China, he felt he had to remain in China to help the Chinese people. He sent his wife Florence of Canadian Missionary parentage, to Canada with the children to stay with her family. Liddell was sent to an internment camp by the Japanese, He worked tirelessly doing anything that needed to be done, whether it was Bible study, teaching children or organizing sports. In a prisoner exchange bargain, Winston Churchill arranged for Liddell to be set free but he gave it up so that a pregnant woman would be set free instead.

In 1944 Liddell became ill. The doctors did not have the resources to diagnose the nature of his illness. On February 21, 1945, he became extremely ill coughing uncontrollably. As his friends came to be with him he lay back and said. “***It is surrender***”. He had finished the race. Eric Liddell was truly committed to Christ. He had the opportunity to

Page 6

leave China but decided not to leave. His life was invested in reaching the lost in China. **He worked for a prize far greater than gold, even Olympic gold.**

Revd Olufemi Cole-Njie- *Culled from articles on the Internet*

Story 2: Steph Cooke

Dr. Stephanie Cook MBE born February 1972 in Irvine, North Ayrshire, Scotland, is a retired modern pentathlete and Olympic Gold medalist. She was educated at Bedford High School, The Perse School for Girls; Peterhouse, Cambridge and Lincoln College, Oxford, where she read medicine.

Whilst becoming an active sportswoman at school and then at the University of Cambridge, it was not until 1994 when studying at the University of Oxford that a notice on a college bulletin board prompted Stephanie to try the Modern Pentathlon. She then started to compete nationally and recognized her potential and so., it wasn't long before she was beating most of the National team and was selected for her first international competition – just days before taking her final medical examinations.

For a couple of years she entered international competitions whilst working the notoriously long hours of junior doctors and in 1999, took the decision to put her medical career on hold, so that she could focus and train more for the Modern Pentathlon. Stephanie rowed at Cambridge and took up modern pentathlon whilst completing her course in clinical medicine at Oxford. She was president of the Oxford University Modern Pentathlon Association 1995-1996 and

Page 7

won the women's individual title in the Varsity match against Cambridge in 1997. Having put her medical career on hold she won the Gold medal in the Sydney 2000 Olympics in the women's Modern Pentathlon - the first time that the event was included in the games. She then went on to win the world championships in 2001 before retiring from the sport. Her particular strength was running. Success in all sports requires considerable talent and dedication, but success in the five events that comprise the Modern Pentathlon requires the versatility to develop diverse skills and fitness for very different events and challenges.

Stephanie surprised many people by retiring from Modern Pentathlon at the peak of her achievements and as the reigning Olympic, European and World Champion. She commented on this when receiving the Sunday Times Helen Rollason Award for inspiration in late 2001 ***“I was training to be a doctor before I even took up pentathlon. I was always going to go back to medicine; it was just a question of when, rather than if”***. Stephanie became a household figure through appearances on popular TV programs such as ***-A Question of Sport; This is your life; Grandstand; and Sport Relief.***

Although no longer involved in sport as an athlete, Stephanie continues to play an important role. She was an ambassador for the London 2012 Olympic bid and is a member of the Sports Advisory Group for the London 2012 organising committee. She was a foundation member of the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine established in July 2007. Steph, is a member of the organizing committee for 'More than Gold' and launched that organisation's, Athletes Family Home Stay Program in November 2012.

Page 8

Stephanie's careful stewardship of her two potentially contrasting life-goals serve as a reminder to us all of what can be achieved if we have self-belief, willing to work hard and able to make the right decisions at the right time.

Blossom Jackson-Source: *Dr Dylan's Valedictory Oration- on Stephanie - Bath University 2007; More Than Gold*

Hymn- Show me How to Stand for Justice- Singing the Faith 713

Show me how to stand for justice;
How to work for what is right,
How to challenge false assumptions,
How to walk within the light.
May I learn to share more freely
In a world so full of greed,
Showing your immense compassion
By the life I choose to lead.

Teach my heart to treasure mercy,
Whether given or received-
For my need has not diminished
Since the day I first believed:
Let me seek no satisfaction
Boasting of what I have done,
But rejoice that I have pardoned
And accepted in your Son.

Gladly I embrace a lifestyle
Modeled on your living word,
In humility submitting
To the truth which I have heard.

Page 9

Make me conscious of your presence
Every day in all I do:
By your spirit's gracious prompting
May I learn to walk with you

Story 3 Jesse Owen

Jesse Owen, was born on September 12, 1913, in Oakville, Alabama, U.S, the son of a sharecropper and grandson of a slave. He achieved what no Olympian before him had accomplished. His stunning achievement of four gold medals at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin has made him perhaps the best remembered athlete in Olympic history.

His achievement at those Olympics is, of course, most remembered as it was in the context of a Nazi Germany amidst the belief by Hitler that the Games would support his conviction that the German "Aryan" people were the dominant race. Jesse had different plans, as he became the first American track & field athlete to win four gold medals in a single Olympiad. Although others have gone on to win more gold medals than him, he remains the best remembered Olympic athlete because during a time of deep-rooted segregation, he not only discredited Hitler's master race theory, but also affirmed that individual excellence and ability, rather than race or national origin is what distinguishes one from another.

In those days athletes did not receive lucrative product endorsement deals and so Jesse supported his young family

Page10

with a variety of jobs. One was as playground director in Cleveland and this led to a lifetime of working with underprivileged youth.

He traveled widely in his post-Olympic days and became a highly inspirational speaker, much sought after to address youth groups, sports banquets, civic meetings, church organisations and black history programs. He received many awards and honors but it was not until 40 years after his Olympic achievement that in 1976 he received the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the US. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold medal in 1990.

He died on March 31, from complications due to lung cancer. Many words of admiration came from around the world but perhaps President Jimmy Carter summed it up best when he stated: ***"Perhaps no athlete better symbolized the human struggle against tyranny, poverty and racial bigotry."***

His personal triumphs as a world-class athlete and record holder were the prelude to a career devoted to helping others. His work with young athletes, as an unofficial ambassador overseas, and a spokesman for freedom are a rich legacy to his fellow Americans. He was a dreamer, who followed his dreams but then inspired and enabled others to follow theirs. He is quoted as saying: ***'Find the good. It's all around you. Find it, showcase it and you'll start believing it.'***

Jesse's spirit still lives in his three daughters and their work with the Jesse Owens Foundation. The Foundation continues to
Page11

carry on Jesse's legacy by providing financial assistance, support, and services to young individuals with untapped potential in order to develop their talents, broaden their horizons, and become better citizens. There is no doubt that Jesse would be proud.

Jackie Fowler - ***Sourced from internet sources.***

Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell

Jocelyn Bell Burnell, is a renowned British astrophysicist, who as a postgraduate student, discovered the first radio pulsars with her thesis supervisor Antony Hewish

Jocelyn Bell, born in Belfast, lived in Lurgan as a child. Her father was an architect at the Armagh Planetarium. She was encouraged to read and was especially drawn to books on astronomy. At the age of eleven, she failed the 11+ exam and her parents sent her to the Mount School, York- a Quaker Girls boarding school. There, she was impressed by her inspiring physics teacher, Mr. Tillott. She later attended Lurgan College, Northern Ireland where she was one of the first girls at this College who were permitted to study science. Previously, the girl's curriculum had included such subjects as cross-stitching and cooking.

At Cambridge, she worked with Hewish and others to construct a radio telescope to study quasars, which had recently been discovered. and in July 1967, she detected a bit of "scruff" on her chart-recorder papers that tracked across the sky with the stars. Ms. Bell found that the signal was pulsing with great regularity, at a rate of about one
Page 12

pulse per second. The source was identified latterly, as a rapidly rotating neutron star. The paper announcing the discovery had five authors, Hewish's name being listed first, Bell's second. But Dr. Hewish was awarded the Nobel Prize, along with Dr. Martin Ryle, without the inclusion of Bell as a co-recipient, which was controversial, and was roundly condemned by Hewish's fellow astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle,

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, in their press release announcing the 1974 Nobel Prize in Physics, cited Ryle and Hewish for their pioneering work in radio-astrophysics, with particular mention of Ryle's work and Hewish's decisive role in the discovery of pulsars. Dr. Iosif Shklovsky, recipient of the 1972 Bruce Medal, sought out Bell at the 1970 International Astronomical Union's General Assembly, to tell her: "**Miss Bell, you have made the greatest astronomical discovery of the twentieth century.**"

After finishing her PhD degree, Bell Burnell worked at Southampton, University College London and The Edinburgh Observatories. She was also Tutor, lecturer, consultant and examiner, for the Open University. Since then, she has occupied several prominent positions, Nationally and Internationally in academic fields in her chosen specialist career of astrophysics and have made a number TV and Radio broadcasts,

Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, a Quaker, has campaigned tirelessly, to improve the status and number of women in professional and academic posts in physics and astronomy

Blossom Jackson - **Source: BBC Radio 4 November 2011; Wikipedia**

Page 13

Bible Readings

1Corinthians 9: 24-27; 2Timothy 4: 6-10;

Acts 18 1-4; 18-21

Hymn- May the mind of Christ my Saviour- Singing the Faith- 504

May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
By his love and power controlling
All I do or say.

May the word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through his power.

May the peace of God my father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me.
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self forgetting-
This is victory

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

Page 14

Story 5 Priscilla- The Good Host

Priscilla was a Jewish wife who along with her husband Aquila, hosted Paul and Barnabas and other Christians when they visited Corinth where they lived and practiced their Christian faith in love, to all people. This was after the Emperor Claudius expelled all of the Jewish community from Rome. Priscilla is often referred to in the New Testament as one of the leader in her mission work, and as a host to other Christian. The portrayal of her ministry indicates the elevated status of those women who at that time were proclaiming the gospel message of Christ Jesus.

Paul was a guest in Priscilla and Aquila's home and he built up a relationship with the couple whilst living with them. He not only proclaimed his ministry, but also joined them in tent making, their Jewish traditional occupation. A deep and lasting friendship developed between Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, Which inspired Paul; and he stayed with them for about three years, doing his mission work and tent making. When Paul left Corinth he traveled to Ephesus, and they accompanied him. There, Paul trained them in ministerial work so that they could continue evangelism work in his absence. Priscilla and her husband kept in regular contact with Paul through his letters of encouragement to them.

Priscilla, then hosted a house church in Ephesus in a supporter of Paul's ministry; and her commitment showed her love for God and faith believing in Christ Jesus by professing and

sharing of the gospel message. Believers were always welcomed in Priscilla's home which was made available for Christian gatherings. Priscilla's ministry as a host brought others to follow Christ Jesus, as they sensed the faith which she expressed in her daily life and service caring for others with love and understanding in her heart. Priscilla can be seen as one of the few iconic women in the Bible who were servants of God and one of Christ Jesus disciples in word and action.

Mathilda Small- Byam- *Sources- Corinthian 18; Internet*

Address: Brief Reflection on Bible Readings; Training for Gold

Offertory

Prayers Of intercession

*Methodist Women in Britain
A Safe and Fair 2012 Olympics
Trafficked women
Women in Position of Leadership
Women in Prison, asylum seekers, refugees
Women in One Parent families
Women struggling with poverty, marginalized women*

The Lords Prayer

Hymn-Fight the Good Fight H&P 710

Fight the good fight with all thy might;
Christ is thy Strength, and Christ thy Right;
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race through God's good grace,
Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face;
Life with its way before us lies,
Christ is the Path, and Christ the Prize.

Cast care aside, upon thy Guide,
Lean, and His mercy will provide;
Lean, and the trusting soul shall prove
Christ is its Life, and Christ its Love.

Faint not nor fear, His arms are near,
He changeth not, and thou art dear.
Only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is all in all to thee.

Blessings

Bj/jan/2012